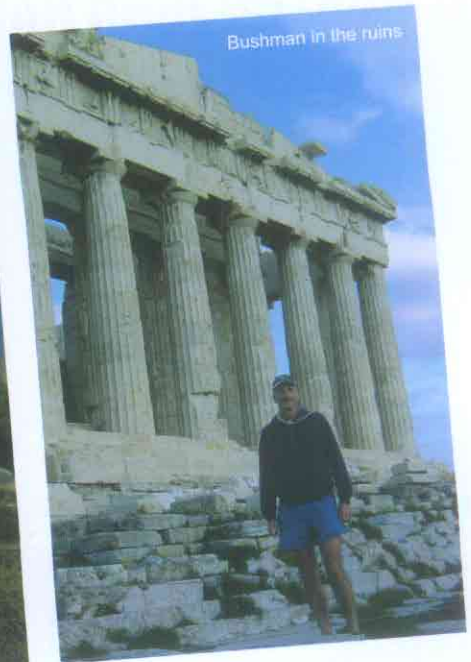
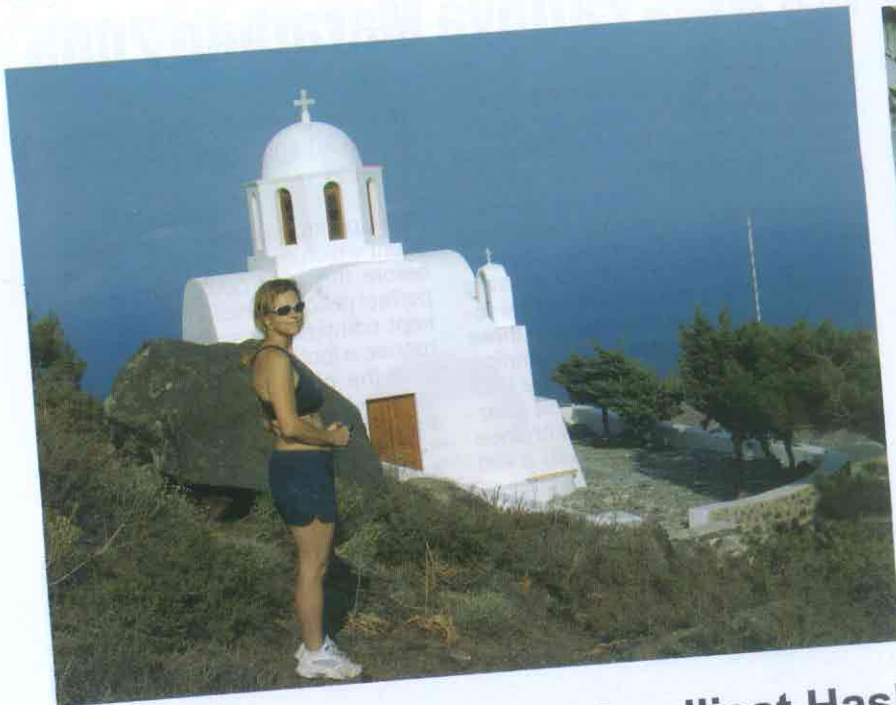


## Destination: Greece

by Chris 'Bushman' Schulz



### Athens HHH, the friendliest Hash in the world? ... Or how to chase the Greek Hash Goddess...



Well when, for over a decade, you have been continually spoilt by Asian smiles, service-minded attitudes, and general friendliness, adapting to any other part of the world is an uphill challenge.

Being ripped out of my beloved Asian Hash circles this January and sent on a Mediterranean assignment to Greece was definitely not what I had been looking for, and the freezing temperatures, rudeness of some locals, and lack-of-service attitude, never mind the rip-offs in some locations, etc, instantly hit me hard. On the other hand, the much-feared pollution and traffic jams did not bother me too much, because that's what we are used to in any Asian Metropolis.

Unfortunately, all did not work out on my first weekend in Greece, which I had to spend in Thessaloniki (Can you believe it, these poor bastards in the scenic home town of "Alexander the Great" only have a chance of hashing once a month! Poor guys, I feel sorry for them.), but my second Sunday, by then based in the Greek capital, was the start of a continuously improving situation in the, at that time, still very unfamiliar environment.

On-Sec Sharon "Clitoria" Sherwood-Robson made sure I received the hash newsletter (in the "Hebdomadal Epistle", it refers to the AHHH as "the friendliest hash in the world") in time and, after many phone calls, she organized Elise "Biggles" Wheeler to help me with a lift to the site where my first Athens H3 run was a memorable experience.

Hash Cash, Carmen "Spanish Fly" Fernandez, a hash veteran, welcomed me and, by virtue of being a first time visitor, kindly waived my run fee. Scot Carolyn "Shiva" Clark, (yes, her uncle Jim knew how to drive race cars), at that time still GM of the "Athens Full Moon Hash" and a 17-year resident in the Greek capital, gave useful advice on how to handle the locals and get around in town, etc. Everybody was very friendly and I immediately felt part of the crowd.

On that overcast Sunday, the hare, "Delhi Boy", a familiar face from IH Goa '02, had laid the trail north of the City through the high forests over ground covered under 15cm of snow. Yes, I had seen that white soft stuff in Asia before but only in my freezer, or while cycling across





the Himalayans, or cross-country running in Mongolia - but on a trail within sight of the southern tip of the Mediterranean coastline it was far beyond my expectations.

Not running on white flour made sense but the traditional marking in "Athens Blue" was still not always easy to follow and my reputation of continuously "checking" in the wrong directions caught up with me. Traditionally, the hash horn is passed on at every check to make sure that the pack stays together.

Ice, snow, wind - no problem. After the run (AHHH is very considerate, they cater for runners and walkers) the circle is led by RA Brian "Strawberry Foreskin" Kirman with funny comments and down-downs. GM Robert "Mad Dog" Horne and Richard "Self Service" Lucas usually volunteer and contribute with funny jokes. "Shit of the Week" gets awarded regularly and Nikolao "Oxymoron" Papaioanouis, with a reputation of arriving in his pussy-mobile late, is a pretty good bet to be decorated with the upgraded toilet seat. Surprisingly visitors are not treated to rude comments but receive welcome "down downs" and immediately get integrated in the activities and even encouraged to contribute during the circle. Under these sub-zero temperatures, my

preference for an ice cold amber brew is rather limited, however, the wine served during the ONONON, traditionally celebrated at a nearby Taverna or "Souvlaki Joint", in a very warm and friendly atmosphere, compensated for all the, for me, very unusual low temperatures.

Following my first run with the AHHH, I tried to return to my normal routine by planning my busy work schedule around the AHHH programme. During the winter, half of the year it's Sunday noon when the hash trails lead over the neighboring hills to great views of the coast line and neighboring valleys, following goat trails through bush, olive plantations, open fields and fruit trees which, especially in spring time, are an unforgettable sight. Since the summers can get pretty hot and many try to escape over the weekends to the nearby Islands and beaches, during the warm season the AHHH runs Monday evenings instead.

Besides the normal runs, every extraordinary event is made into a special occasion. "Bookmaker's" AHHH Run No. 600, for example, was celebrated in February as a joint AHHH and "Athens Full Moon HHH" extravaganza at the beach of Porto Germanos on the shores of the Golf of Corinth, with great runs



Class downs "Strawberry 4 Skin" and "Self Service"



Carnival Run



Even in subzero temperatures AHHH is having fun



Down-Down for "Bookmaker" and "Wee-Mac"



Bookmaker gets his Run 600 jug





Carnival Run



Preston Pete is excited to run in his pink Bangkok Harriettes tights

and a 2-day party. That the heavy rain had washed away the marking laid by hare "Pink Jenny" - in what else but unique pink - did not bother too much, since the circle and the party organized by Alan "All Day Sucker" Sweetman at a beach house belonging to an Embassy of one of the Southern Hemisphere's hash friendly countries, were well organized. Like always on these occasions, Scottish/Australian "Hamish", a hard-core hasher from Sydney's "Posh HHH", took the opportunity to show off his cooking talent by preparing excellent dishes.

Also outside the runs, regular social events mobilize the hash crowd. Are you up for a joint sundowner at a well-known watering hole, dancing the night away in one of the salsa clubs on weekends, movie nights on Wednesdays, or a dinner hosted by an AHHH volunteer? Just ask and it seems that AHHH is always in party mode. By joining the annual "Terry Fox Run" in April, organized worldwide by the relevant Canadian Embassies, charity is also always something AHHH is ready to contribute to. Further fun and public attention may be found at the annual Red Dress and the Carnival Runs.

Very popular amongst foreign Hashers are the traditional AHHH Greek Island Weekends. Organized before and after the main tourist season, these biannual events draw hashers from all over Europe. "Preston Pete", who also has hashed in Bangkok, is a regular on these events. He often rides one of his 1960 model Triumph motorbikes down from Northern England, not only to escape the unfriendly English rain, but to enjoy the friendliness of AHHH, and join the party crowd. Other hashers from the UK, Germany, and Switzerland also joined the "Naxos Island Runs" weekend in May '05.

AHHH - the friendliest hash in the world? You bet. I am looking forward to joining up again soon with Shiva, Banger, Fiery Tw\*d, Love Bug, Mountain Goat, Kum Kwik, Rim Job, Mash and all the others to hash around the ancient temples where the gorgeous Greek Hash Goddesses keep on serving vino and the Ouzo never stops flowing. ON-EVER-ON AHHH!!